

2016

Jacksonville  
Recreation &  
Parks Department

# FLAG FOOTBALL Rules



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"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it."

— Lou Holtz

## Notes

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## Notes

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## Program Format

### Mission

The mission of the Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department's Athletic Division is to provide an organized setting for youth to participate in athletics for recreation and relaxation, promote fair play and good sportsmanship, and provide fellowship among participants. The Department will encourage coaches to stress the importance of developing players self esteem; pride in one's accomplishments; and emphasize a positive outlook on life.

### Structure

1. The league will be known as the Jacksonville Recreation Youth League. It will be administered by the Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department (JRPD). There will be times that the League Administrator will need to make decisions for the betterment of the league and has authority in interpreting the rules and regulations.
2. All local rules will apply first. If not covered by the local rules, then the National Intramural And Recreation Sports Association (NIRSA) for flag football rules will be followed. The League administrator will interpret all rules and his/her decision will be final.
3. The registration fee for flag football is \$30 for City Residents and \$55 for Non-Residents. There will be a \$25 administrative fee assessed on all re-funds.
4. The JRPD program is divided into the following categories:

#### **Flag Football**

Boys & Girls	ages (6-9) fundamental
Boys & Girls	ages (10-12) competitive

**\*\*Age groups are determined as age prior to September 2, 2016.\*\***

*\*Level 3.1 and 3.2 offenders must petition to appear before the Semper Fit Sports branch to seek reinstatement after their ban expires. The NYSCA status of coaches will be reviewed upon commission of a Level 3.1 or 3.2 offense.*

## Ejections & Suspensions

### **Grounds for Ejection/Suspension**

Coaches, players and spectators shall be subject to ejection from the game and playing area by the officials for misconduct.

### **Sanctions for Ejections**

#### **Removal from Premises**

Coaches, players and spectators ejected from a match must leave the premises for the remainder of the day. Play will not resume until the ejected individual has been removed. Refusal to leave may result in contacting PMO.

Coaches, players and spectators ejected will not be eligible to attend or participate in the next played match. Determination for suspension of a coach, player or spectator for a longer period of time, will be the responsibility and at the discretion of the Youth Sports Manager.

Suspension or dismissal from the season's play may occur with any serious infraction involving unsportsmanlike conduct at the discretion of the League Administrator.

### **Grievance & Misconduct Cases**

#### **Submissions**

Instances of misconduct by a participant, coach, spectator or official shall be referred in writing by the complainant to the Athletics Division. Grievances must be submitted within 48 hours from the occurrence of the incident.

#### **Replies**

Within 48 hours of receipt of a written complaint the Athletics Division will contact the complainant to confirm that appropriate action has been initiated or concluded.

The Athletics Division will handle all grievances whenever possible or forward the grievance to the next higher level within JRPD if deemed appropriate.

#### **Appeals**

Any grievance decision may be appealed in writing with five days to the JRPD League Administrator.

## Code of Conduct

### **Code of Conduct for All Involved**

The Code of Conduct applies to all parties relative to all athletic programs, facilities, and personal interactions and communications.

The Code of Conduct may be applied in addition to penalties assessed to ejected players, coaches, and spectators.

OFFENSE	ACTION(S)	LENGTH OF SANCTION(S)	SANCTION(S)
LEVEL 1	Excessive Profanity Taunting/ Baiting Argumentative/Unruly Behavior Failure to comply after Warning Other Offenses deemed Level 1	One (1) week	Immediate removal from site; plus one week ban from all Division programs, activities, and facilities.
LEVEL 2	Verbal Abuse Inciting unruly behavior Abuse/Damage to Property Failure to comply with Smoking/Tobacco Policy Other offenses deemed Level 2	Two (2) weeks	Immediate removal from site; plus two week ban from all division programs, activities, and facilities
LEVEL 3.1	Fighting Verbal/Written Threats Possession/Use of alcohol/drugs Other offenses deemed Level 3.1	One (1) Year	Immediate removal from site; plus sanctions according to severity of offense.*
LEVEL 3.2	Assaulting a patron, official or staff member Weapons Possession/Use Other offenses deemed Level 3.2	Two (2) years	Immediate removal from site; plus 2 year ban from all division programs, activities and facilities (possible criminal offense per state statute)*

### 5. EVALUATION AND DRAFT

- There will be **no assessments**. Participants will be placed on teams by the Athletic Staff.
- Siblings will be placed on the same team. (*participants in the same household will be treated as siblings*)
- Head Coach and Assistant Coach's children will be placed on their team.
  - Once a team's assistant coach has been selected and their child/children placed on that team, a coach may not select another assistant, for the purpose of adding a child/children to a team while those children are on that team.
- No more than twelve (12) players allowed per team.
- Requests to move players up an age group will not be accepted.
- Players may be held back from their appropriate age group for a single year if said player has a diagnosed developmental delay, or a physical or mental disability. Appropriate medical documentation of disability must be provided, with health care provider recommendation.
- Request by parents for their child to go back through the draft will be permitted each season.
- Requests by parents for a child will be permitted but not guaranteed.
- Players may NOT be on more than one (1) team.
  - PENALTY:** Each game played in will result in a forfeiture.

6. RECRUITING: JRPD will not condone the recruiting of players by coaches or coaches having players request to go back through the draft in order to be drafted by this coach.

**PENALTY:** Coach is subject to dismissal by Recreation Department.

7. Players **may not be dropped** from a team without the approval of JRPD. Coaches shall:
- Report all players that move or stop coming to games to the League Administrator .
  - Make all necessary inquiries as to the reason for a player's absence.
8. INSURANCE: Participants are responsible for obtaining their own medical insurance.
9. PRACTICE: Practice sites and times will be assigned to all teams.
- Teams may practice no more than two (2) times a week.
  - Teams are encouraged to practice at least once a week during the season.
10. UNIFORMS: JRPD will issue a uniform consisting of a jersey. Players must wear issued uniforms and may not alter them in any way. Players will keep these at the end of the season.

## 11. COACHES:

- a. All volunteer coaches will be selected by the Athletic Staff.
- b. Will be certified by the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA).
- c. Must submit to a background check.
- d. Any coach before or during the season charged with a crime by a law enforcement agency will be suspended until such time a ruling by the court system has been made. The decision as to whether or not he/she will be allowed to continue coaching will be based on the court's decision and review by JRPD.
- e. Are expected to present themselves in a manner befitting the position of a leader and instructor of today's youth. Cursing or any abuse, either verbally or physically, will be not be tolerated. Drinking should not be done on days of practice or games.
- f. Will be suspended for one calendar year from coaching any youth sport and must petition the JRPD Commission for reinstatement for:
  1. Playing someone not registered with JRPD.
  2. Playing an ineligible player.

Basic Coaching Guidelines

- While each coach will have his or her own style of coaching, the Head Coach is ultimately responsible for all activities their team engages in. All subordinate coaches take direction from, and report to the Head Coach. Parents should support the Head Coach's requests for things within reason. Since there is an enormous amount of responsibility placed upon the Head Coach, they should be properly prepared to carry out the basic tasks of team training, and organization.
- Ensure the players are warmed up and stretched before every practice/game.
- Make sure to do a cool down stretch at the conclusion of every practice/game.
- Ensure coaches know all the proper stretches and can demonstrate for players as they should lead all warm ups/stretchers until they are confident players can lead under coach's supervision.
- Ensure coaches pass down dress knowledge to players/parents.
- Coaches must ensure that player's equipment is worn properly before ANY activity at ANY time. Looking over players before/between drills or at breaks in activity is the best time to do this.
- Ensure each player has all necessary equipment for all related drills, or exercises. This includes footwear.
- Ensure players equipment fits correctly. This may require some sort of evaluation mid-season as players shapes may change significantly during the course of the season.

## Flag Football (6-12)

**PASS INTERFERENCE:**Offensive- **PENALTY- 5 yards and loss of down**Defensive- **PENALTY- Ball will be spotted at the spot of infraction****PENALTY ENFORCEMENT:**

1. No penalty will be assessed that moves the ball more than half the distance to the goal line except for defensive pass interference. (A defensive pass interference penalty in the end zone will place the ball on the one foot line.)
2. Penalty infractions between downs will be enforced from the spot of the next snap.
3. If the last defender between the ball carrier and the end zone commits a penalty on the ball carrier, a touchdown will be awarded.

**INADVERTANT WHISTLE:**

The ball is dead and the down is ended when the official sounds their whistle inadvertently. NOTE: At the officials' discretion, the disadvantaged team will have a choice of replaying the down, or having the play stand.

**NOTES:**

- a) Coaches are not allowed to do "BULL" in the ring at any time during practices or games.
- b) Coaches are reminded to take all their gear, and dispose of trash after their practices and games.

**Game Protests**

National Federation of State High School Associations does not recognize protests. Any questionable situation that occurs must be resolved at the time of the infraction, before the next play occurs. Game officials will be the ruling body for all regular High School Federation rules. If the call or situation involves league special rules, the Youth Sports representative will be the ruling body. If a situation occurs that cannot be resolved to everyone's satisfaction a grievance may be submitted in writing per grievance policy.

## Flag Football (6-12)

**BLOCKING:** OFFENSE- An offensive blocker may only use the standing block, with the arms not extended past the elbows (i.e. a pushing motion.) There is no blocking below the waist or extending the arms into the face of a defender.

**PENALTY-10 Yards and possible ejection.**

**DEFENSE-** Defensive blockers are restrained in the use of the hands to pushing the shoulders and the chest of the offensive blockers. Slapping and striking is not allowed and is a personal foul. **PENALTY- 10 Yards**

**UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:** Obscene language or actions, either on or off the field by players, coaches or spectators, will not be tolerated. **PENALTY - 10 yards and possible ejection.**

### CHARGING AND TACKLING:

1. The ball carrier may not run through a defensive player, but must make a legitimate attempt to evade the defensive players. The defensive player must not hold or run through the ball carrier, **BUT MUST PLAY THE FLAG AND NOT THE BALL OR THE PLAYER.**
2. The quarterback is considered the ball carrier until he/she releases the ball. The defensive player may attempt to block a pass as long as they do not go through the receiver.

Violators involved in the following fouls may be ejected from the game at the discretion of the official: **PENALTY- 10 yards or ejection**

1. Tackling the ball carrier
2. Blocking the ball carrier
3. Tripping the ball carrier
4. Pushing the ball carrier
5. Bumping or pushing the ball carrier out of bounds
6. The ball carrier charging a defender
7. Roughing the passer
8. Any kind of fighting

### GUARDING THE FLAGS:

If a player guards his flags, the ball will be considered dead. **PENALTY- 5 yards from the spot of the infraction.**

### HOLDING:

Offensive holding- **PENALTY- 5 yards**

Defensive holding- **PENALTY- 5 yards and an automatic first down**

- Ensure drills progress in a logical manner, i.e. crawl, walk, run. Coaches must be confident that all players can perform the drills correctly and consistently before going full speed.
  - Coaches must enforce proper technique at all times. Any movement that is incorrect on the part of the player should be corrected by the coaching staff. Practice does not make perfect. Practice makes permanent. Allowing players to practice improper technique places unnecessary risk on the players as it will become habit.
  - Players must be taught basic skills such as proper stance, movement, body positioning and so on constantly.
  - Defensive players are not permitted to line up directly over the offensive center (head to head) at any time.
  - ***Safety in training should be the primary focus of all coaches/players/parents involved in the Youth Sports Flag Football Program. Any coach/parent/player should be able to freeze practice if an unsafe condition exists.***
12. ABSENCES: JRPD recognizes there are other activities before and during the flag football program. However, players will be expected to make most practices and games. If a player does not make an honest attempt to make practices due to other activities, he/she may be removed from the program.
  13. RAIN-OUTS:
    1. The league schedule will be established by the League Administrator prior to the season.
    2. In case of inclement weather, make-up games will be rescheduled on the first available date by the League Administrator with as much notice as possible. Teams will be expected to play on make-up dates.
      - a. If possible, the League Administrator will make a decision to cancel before 5 PM.
      - b. If cancelled before 5 PM, a message will be left on the Athletic Department's rain-out line, (910) 938-5303. It is the coaches responsibility to notify their team of the cancellation.
      - c. If rain occurs after 5 PM, the decision will be made by the field Supervisor.
      - d. Teams must show up at the field unless notified otherwise.

## Participation Criteria and Playing Rules

### *Player Participation Criteria*

If a team fails to appear, or fails to field the minimum number of 6 uniformed players for flag football at the scheduled game time, the referee shall declare the game forfeited to the team adequately represented and ready to play. Only extreme circumstances may be taken into consideration. If neither team has the minimum number of required players present, the game shall be declared "no contest" and rescheduled. Game time will be forfeit time for all competitive games. In the spirit of play, teams will loan players to the opponent who is short on players in order for an officiated game to take place.

Each participant will play in every offensive play or every defensive play, except where listed under the exceptions to the player participation rule. Examples: A team with 12 players will have 2 players that can play on offense and defense/both ways. A team with 11 players can have 3 players playing both ways. Special teams/PAT can consist of any 7 players. Exceptions to the player participation rule: A player is removed by coaches/officials, or removes self from participation due to injury, illness, fatigue, or for disciplinary reasons. Prior to the start of a game, a player not participating must be declared in writing, to the youth sports representative by the head coach as being ineligible (due to injury/illness/or missed practices.) A player must attend at least ½ of the practices in a week to be eligible for full participation time. If a player arrives late, the coach is only obligated to play that player starting the beginning of the next quarter. Participation by children with Special Needs will depend on each child's needs and abilities. This will be worked out between parents, coaches, and Youth Sports Coordinators. It is the intent to maintain program integrity and to ensure fair play and sportsmanship.

## Flag Football (6-12)

**Dead ball situations:** The referee shall declare the ball dead and end the down.

1. When a ball carrier has lost his/her flag or flags. When the defense pulls the flag, they must stop where they pulled the flag and hold it up in the air to help signal to the official the ball is dead.
2. If a ball carrier loses their flags inadvertently **BEFORE** handling the ball, the ball will be called dead when the flagless player possesses the ball.
3. When the ball or the ball carrier goes out of bounds.
4. When the ball carrier leaves his feet, either by jumping or diving in an attempt to evade the defense. (During a spin move, the player may be allowed to leave his feet momentarily to complete the spin.)
5. When a touchdown, safety, or touchback is made.
6. When a lateraled ball, centered ball, or any pass strikes the ground.
7. When the ball carrier's knee touched the ground.
8. At any other time the official declares the ball dead.

**PUNTS:** If a team chooses to punt, the ball will advance 30 yards and the opposing team will take possession. If those 30 yards takes the ball into the end zone, the ball will be placed on the 10 yard line, and the opposing team will take possession from there.

**LEGAL RECEPTION:** Players must have one foot in bounds for a legal reception.

### **PENALTIES AND INFRACTIONS**

**ENCROACHMENT:** This means going into the neutral zone. The neutral zone is a space between the two scrimmage lines during a snap. This is started when the ball is placed ready for play. If either team encroaches, the ball is dead. **PENALTY- 5 YARDS**

**ILLEGAL MOTION:** Offensive players must be still when the ball is snapped. Players are allowed to shift in the formation prior to being set for the snap. **PENALTY- 5 YARDS**

**ILLEGAL HIDEOUTS:** All players must break from the huddle prior to each play. If a team does not huddle, all players must be at least 5 yards from the sidelines when the ball is snapped. **PENALTY-5 YARDS**



## Flag Football (6-12)

### PASSES AND HAND OFFS:

1. All players are eligible pass receivers.
2. All players **except** the center are eligible for hand offs.
3. An incomplete lateral pass is dead at the point of contact with the ground.
4. During the down, the ball is handed forward behind the line of scrimmage to a teammate, who at the time of the snap, was behind the line of scrimmage, or to a lineman, who after the snap, has moved at least one yard from the line of scrimmage.

**CHANGING GOALS:** Teams will change direction at the start of each quarter.

### SCORING:

Touchdown——6 points

Safety——2 points

Conversion——1 point (the ball shall be placed on the 2 1/2 yard line)

Conversion——2 points (the ball shall be placed on the 5 yard line)

### SAFETY:

1. A fumble in one's own end zone.
2. The ball carrier's flag is pulled in one's own end zone.
3. An offensive foul in one's own end zone.

**FUMBLED BALL:** The ball is dead at the point of contact with the ground behind the line of scrimmage or on a backward lateral passed the line of scrimmage. Fumbles forward beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball hits the ground is dead, and will be spotted at the point of lost possession.

**INTERCEPTED BALL IN THE END ZONE:** If a ball is intercepted in the end zone, the ball becomes dead and the intercepting team gains possession of the ball on the 10 yard line.

## Participation Criteria and Playing Rules

### *Lopsided/run-up scores*

After the score reaches a 21 point difference, substitution of key players must begin. Once the 21 point difference is obtained the winning team cannot pass the ball or run reverses. If the winning team fails to abide by this rule, each violation will be a loss of a down and a 5 yard penalty. The losing team is still required to cover all receivers. If the losing team fails to abide by this rule, each violation will be a 5 yard penalty. A running clock will be used in ages 10-15 when the score reaches 21 points in the second half, unless the team behind comes within 8 points.

Any team that plays an ineligible player in the 10-15 age divisions shall forfeit all games in which the player participated. The score of a forfeited game shall be recorded 7-0. In the event the officials are unavailable, the game shall be rescheduled. Games suspended for any reason will be replayed from the point of interruption.

### Special Rules for Flag Football

**NO PADS, NO HELMETS, NO CONTACT, NO TACKLING OR DIVING**

## Flag Football (6-12)

### League

The League will be known as the Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department Flag Football League. The purpose of the league is to provide children an organized setting to learn and begin to develop the skills of football.

### Equipment

1. JRPD will issue the following equipment to Coaches:
  - a. 3-Football
  - b. 7-Pennies
  - c. 1-Set of Flags
2. The coach is responsible for the care and return of the equipment at the end of the season.
3. Broken or faulty equipment can be replaced by bringing the items to the Athletic Office.
  - \* All flags and uniforms will be provided by Youth Sports. No other type of football gear will be allowed.
  - \* Shoes with molded rubber cleats will be worn. Metal spikes are not allowed.
  - \* The only personal protective equipment allowed is knee and elbow pads.
  - \* Players will not be allowed to play with any kind of soft or hard cast or metal or plastic splints.
  - \* **Mouth pieces are MANDATORY and cannot be white or clear.**

### Field

1. 35 X 60 Yards

## Playing Rules

### PLAYERS:

1. 7 ON 7, MAX OF 12 PER TEAM, TEAMS CAN PLAY WITH A MINIMUM OF 6
  - 1) If teams play with 7, then 4 must be on line.
  - 2) If teams play with 6, then 3 must be on line.
2. **Each participant will play in half the game except where listed under the exceptions to the player participation rule on the previous page.**

## Flag Football (6-12)

### TIME OF GAME:

1. The length of the game shall be (4) eight minute quarters with a running clock for ages 6-9; (4) eight minute quarters for ages 10-12 (no running clock); (4) 10 minute quarters for ages 13-15 (no running clock). The ball will be placed on the 10 yard line to start the game with possession based on the pre-game coin toss selection or deferral to the second half.
2. The clock shall be stopped for requested time outs, injuries and after scores. During the last two minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters in the fundamental divisions, the clock will stop for incomplete passes, out of bounds, penalties, time outs, change of possession and scores. The clock will stop for the notification of the 2 minute warning prior to the end of each half. The clock will stop when designated by an official.
3. Each team will receive (4) thirty second time outs per game. These timeouts can be used at any time.
4. Halftime will be 5 minutes.
5. No overtime will be played in the fundamental divisions.

### STARTING THE GAME:

The ball is put in play with the center snap to another player.

### THE GAME:

1. Any offensive formation is allowed.
2. Direct runs by the Quarterback across the line of scrimmage are allowed.
3. Players must stay in the bench area when on the sidelines.
4. One coach will be allowed on the field to direct players, but will not interfere with the flow of the game, in the fundamental divisions.
5. On the sidelines, coaches are permitted between the 10 yard line and mid-field.
6. Spectators and cheerleaders are positioned on the opposite side of the field in designated spaces. Additional spectator spaces may be available, and are to be determined.

**FIRST DOWNS:** To keep possession of the ball, the offensive team must advance the ball 20 yards in four downs. As soon as the ball is advanced over the 20 yards, the following down shall be first down.